

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 H-02 ISO-00 SSM-05
SIG-03 SS-15 PA-02 PM-05 SP-02 /081 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:SP
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
PA/PRS - MR. CARTER
H - MR. FLATEN
SSM - MR. MC ANDREW-
NEA/IAI - MR. KORN
NEA/ARN - MR. DRAPER
NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN
NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----065161 120245Z /66

O 120055Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
SECDEF WASHDC 0000
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000

NSC WASHDC 0000
USICA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

UNCLAS STATE 204451

CINCEUR FOR POLAD, TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - AUGUST 11

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE
EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR AUGUST 11,
1978. SPOKESMAN TODAY WAS HODDING CARTER III.

MR. CARTER: I HAVE ONE STATEMENT TO OFFER.

WE NOTE THAT CROWN PRINCE FAHD RELEASED A STATEMENT TODAY
IN SAUDI ARABIA, FOLLOWING HIS MEETING YESTERDAY WITH
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AMBASSADOR ATHERTON, EXPRESSING SAUDI ARABIA'S SUPPORT
FOR THE MEETING PRESIDENT CARTER IS HAVING AT CAMP DAVID
WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN AND PRESIDENT SADAT. WE
GREATLY APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI
ARABIA FOR THE CAMP DAVID MEETING, AND REMAIN HOPEFUL
THAT THE TALKS BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS, WITH PRESIDENT
CARTER AS PARTICIPANT, WILL FURTHER THE MOVEMENT TOWARD
THE JUST AND LASTING PEACE WE ALL SEEK.

Q. THAT PHRASOLOGY STRIKES ME AS ODD, AND PUTS US BACK
WHERE WE WERE YESTERDAY WITH THE UNITED STATES AS
PARTICIPANT, BUT NOT PARTNER.

A. I DON'T RETREAT FROM THE PHRASE WE'VE USED BEFORE.

Q. IN OTHER WORDS YOU STILL CONSIDER THE TWO WORDS
PARTICIPANT AND PARTNER TO BE INTERCHANGEABLE?

A. I THINK THAT WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY, AND WHAT THE
SECRETARY HAS HAD TO SAY AND WHAT THE WHITE HOUSE HAS
HAD TO SAY IS WHAT I HAVE TO SAY TODAY.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY THOUGHTS ON WHY THE SAUDIS, WHO
HAVE BEEN PORTRAYED AS HAVING CONCLUDED THAT THE
SADAT PEACE INITIATIVE HAS FAILED, HAS NOW ENDORSED
CAMP DAVID?

A. AS I SAID EARLIER WHEN THIS ISSUE AROSE, WE HAVE

CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT SAUDI ARABIA DOES SUPPORT EFFORTS TO REACH A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT. THE AMBASSADOR'S TALKS WITH BOTH FOREIGN MINISTER SAUD AND THE CROWN PRINCE CONFIRM THAT POINT.

Q. HAVE YOU RECEIVED ANY SIGNS OF DISPLEASURE OVER THE SUMMIT FROM ANY ARAB NATION, ANY OTHER NATION?

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A. I'VE SEEN THE SYRIAN RESPONSE, WHICH IS A PRESS REPORT.

Q. ANYTHING GOVERNMENTAL FROM EITHER SYRIA OR JORDAN?

A. I'M NOT AWARE OF THE DIRECT DIPLOMATIC RESPONSE, IN-SOFAR AS JORDAN GOES. AMBASSADOR ATHERTON IS IN AMMAN TODAY. HE PLANS TO SEE KING HUSSEIN TOMORROW, AND HE WILL BE COMING BACK TO WASHINGTON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THEREAFTER FOR MEETINGS EARLY NEXT WEEK WITH THE SECRETARY. TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION, NO, I DON'T HAVE A RESPONSE FROM JORDAN, AND I DON'T HAVE AN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSE FROM SYRIA.

Q. THERE'S A REPORT FROM THE JERUSALEM POST TODAY THAT IDENTIFIES PRESIDENT CARTER AS THE SOURCE OF REPORTS DEALING WITH EITHER AN EGYPTIAN MILITARY BUILD-UP OR A HIGHER ALERT STATUS FOR EGYPTIAN MILITARY FORCES. CAN YOU TELL US ANYTHING ABOUT THAT PLEASE?

A. NO.

Q. IS THE PRESIDENT THE SOURCE OF THOSE REPORTS?

A. I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO CONFIRM OR DENY THAT AS A MATTER OF MY OWN DIRECT KNOWLEDGE, AND I WOULD NOT IN

ANY CASE COMMENT ON SUCH A REPORT.

Q. BEFORE THE PRESIDENT SENT HIS INVITATIONS TO MR. SADAT AND MR. BEGIN, HE, IN EFFECT, CLEARED THE IDEA WITH SAUDI ARABIA. SAUDI ARABIA'S RESPONSE WAS SUPPOSED
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TO HAVE BEEN THAT IT HAD NO SERIOUS OBJECTIONS TO SUCH A MEETING. IS THIS CORRECT?

A. NO.

Q. YOU MEAN, THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION WITH THE SAUDIS BEFORE THE INVITATIONS WENT OUT ABOUT THIS TRILATERAL SUMMIT?

A. THAT'S RIGHT.

Q. HERE OR IN SAUDI ARABIA?

A. THAT'S RIGHT.

Q. DO YOU, IN FACT, REGARD PRINCE FAHD'S RESPONSE AS BEING AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE SADAT PEACE INITIATIVE, OR DID THEY ENDORSE IT AS A TOTALLY NEW KIND OF INITIATIVE?

A. AS THE SAUDIS SAID ON THIS, "HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS EXPRESSED HOPE AND OPTIMISM THAT SUCH A MEETING WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE WORLD-WIDE PRESTIGE STATUS AND WEIGHT HE BRINGS WITH HIM, WILL BE A BIG STEP TOWARD ACHIEVING THE DESIRED JUST PEACE."

Q. WAS THIS ISSUED IN ENGLISH OR IN ARABIC, OR BROADCASTED BY THE SAUDI ARABIAN RADIO TO ALL ARAB COUNTRIES?

A. AS A STARTER, THE ONLY THING I'M SURE OF IS THAT IT APPEARED AS A STATEMENT FROM THE CROWN PRINCE IN A DAILY NEWSPAPER "OKAZ."

Q. DID THE EGYPTIANS AND WE EVER DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF THE EGYPTIAN PLEDGE ON SINAI--THE 3-YEAR PLEDGE ON NO WARFARE--EXPIRING IN OCTOBER? DOES THIS HAVE SOME RELATIONSHIP TO CAMP DAVID?
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A. I REALLY COULDN'T DISCUSS WHAT WE DISCUSSED. THAT MATTER HAS BEEN RAISED PUBLICLY IN THE PAST. I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO INTO WHAT THEY TALKED ABOUT PRIVATELY.

Q. HAS IT BEEN DISCUSSED BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE EGYPTIANS?

A. I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO GO INTO WHAT WE DISCUSSED.

Q. I MEAN APART FROM THE DETAIL, JUST THE SUBJECT ITSELF, IS THAT RIGHT?

A. I'D REALLY RATHER NOT TRY. THE REASON, I REALLY WOULDN'T HAVE TOO MUCH OBJECTION TO ANSWERING THAT QUESTION, BUT IT JUST IS AN OPENER, AND THERE ARE A LOT OF OTHER THINGS THAT LEGITIMATELY WOULD BE OPEN.

Q. WITH REFERENCE TO LEBANON, IT SEEMS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS PUT ITSELF IN A POSITION, WHERE IT WON'T SAY YES OR NO, OR MAYBE ON JUST WHAT IS THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE SUPPORT BEING GIVEN BY THE SYRIAN FORCES TO THE LEBANESE ARMY CONTINGENT THAT IS NOW IN SOUTHERN LEBANON?

A. I DON'T THINK I HAVE ANYTHING CHANGED ON THAT FOR THE LAST WEEK OR SO.

Q. YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN ANY OPINION AS TO THE USE BY ISRAEL OF WEAPONS IN A RETALIATORY RAID, THE POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF AMERICAN ORIGINATED WEAPONS TO THE UNCLASSIFIED

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CHRISTIAN MILITIA. YOU SAY YOU WONT ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS, ISN'T THAT RIGHT? ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU SAID YESTERDAY?

A. I THINK IT PROBABLY COMES DOWN TO THAT.

Q. HAVE WE SAID ANYTHING TOTHE RUSSIANS ABOUT POURING ARMS INTO THE HANDS OF THE SYRIAN FORCES? HAVE WE SAID ANYTHING ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA TELLING THE PLO TO COOL IT PERMANENTLY? AFTER ALL, SAUDI ARABIA PROVIDES TENS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS EACH YEAR TO THE PLO PEOPLE.

A. NO, I HAVEN'T SAID ANYTHING PUBLICLY ABOUT IT, NO.

Q. ARE YOU PREPARED TO SAY ANYTHING TODAY?

A. NO.

Q. DO YOU WANT TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

A. NO. I JUST DON'T WANT TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST.

Q. IN LEBANON ALSO, HAS THE UNITED STATES TAKEN ANY POSITION ON THE SPECIFIC PLAN OF MAKING BEIRUT AN OPEN CITY?

A. THAT FALLS UNDER THE CATEGORY OF SOMETHING I WAS PREPARED TO ANSWER YESTERDAY, AND IT WASN'T ASKED. I'LL TAKE IT AND POST IT, AND HAVE AN ANSWER FOR YOU.

Q. WHAT ABOUT THE AMERICANS IN THE SINAI, UNDER THE SINAI II AGREEMENT -- THE MONITORING STAFF. DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT EXPECT TO WITHDRAW THEM, IF NOTHING HAPPENS TO CONTINUE SINAI II?

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A. I THINK FOR THE READOUT AGAIN ON OUR POSITION ON THAT SUBJECT, I WILL TAKE THE QUESTION, RATHER THAN MY GIVING YOU WHAT I THINK IT IS.

Q. IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT KEEPING ANY KIND OF TALLY OF THE NUMBER OF LEBANESE CHRISTIANS WHO ARE BEING KILLED BY THE ARTILLERY BARRAGES OF THE SYRIAN PEACE-KEEPING FORCE? ARE WE KEEPING TRACK OF THAT?

A. I THINK WE HAVE CONFLICTING REPORTS ON IT, AND WE HAVE PROBABLY SOME RANGES, BUT I DONT THINK WE HAVE ESTIMATED.

Q. WHAT DO YOU ESTIMATE AS THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE KILLED BY THE SYRIAN PEACE-KEEPING FORCES ARTILLERY?

A. I WOULD NOTE, OF COURSE, THAT THAT SET OF EXCHANGES SEEMS TO HAVE ENDED AND THERE SEEMS TO BE A PROCESS GOING ON IN BEIRUT WHICH OFFERS SOME HOPE FOR A LASTING CEASEFIRE AND A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

THE PROBLEM, LITERALLY SPEAKING, IS THAT THE ESTIMATES TEND TO RANGE WILDLY, DEPENDING ON WHO OFFERS THEM; AND INDEED WITHIN THE RANKS OF THE FOLK ON THE CHRISTIAN SIDE, THE ESTIMATES RANGE A GOOD DEAL. I DONT THINK THAT WE HAVE AN ACCURATE NUMBER.

Q. HAVE THE SYRIANS TOLD US HOW MANY THEY ESTIMATE THEY'VE KILLED?

A. NO.

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Q. DO THEY SAY THAT THEY HAVE KILLED ANYBODY, OR DO THEY SAY THAT IT'S ALL MADE UP BY THE CHRISTIANS?

A. I CANT GO INTO DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES OF ANY SORT ON THAT--OBVIOUSLY.

Q. I SEE. DO WE HAVE ANY IDEA WHEN IT MIGHT BE APPROPRIATE FOR THIS HEAVILY ARMED PEACE FORCE OF THE SYRIANS TO GO HOME? LIKE WE WERE ANXIOUS FOR THE ISRAELIS TO GO HOME?

A. AT THE TIME THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT --

Q. BUT NOT UNTIL THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT. WE FEEL THAT THEY SHOULD BE THERE AND DO WHAT THEY'RE DOING UNTIL THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT --

A. OUR FEELING REALLY DOESN'T EXTEND TO THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT INVITING THEM IN.

2. THE FOLLOWING ANSWERS WERE POSTED IN THE DEPARTMENT PRESS OFFICE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS TAKEN.

Q. DOES THE U.S. PLAN TO WITHDRAW ITS PERSONNEL FROM THE SINAI FIELD MISSION IF SINAI II IS NOT CONTINUED?

A. THE SINAI FIELD MISSION EXISTS AS A RESULT OF A U.S. PROPOSAL SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS AT THE TIME THE SINAI II AGREEMENT WAS NEGOTIATED. THE U.S. PROPOSAL IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THAT AGREEMENT.

ARTICLE IX STATES THAT "THIS AGREEMENT SHALL REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL SUPERCEDED BY A NEW AGREEMENT."

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THEREFORE, WE ASSUME THE AMERICAN PERSONNEL WILL CONTINUE TO REMAIN THERE AS LONG AS THIS IS WHAT THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS WANT AND AS LONG AS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AGREES.

Q. WHAT IS THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO THE IDEA OF MAKING BEIRUT A DEMILITARIZED "OPEN CITY?"

A. ANYTHING THAT WOULD REDUCE TENSIONS IN BEIRUT AND SERVE TO INCREASE STABILITY- WOULD BE WELCOMED BY US. MAKING BEIRUT A DEMILITARIZED, OPEN CITY WOULD ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

EARLY IN JULY, THE SECRETARY CALLED FOR A REDUCTION ON ARMS IN LEBANON, AND THE BEIRUT AREA WOULD BE A LOGICAL AND MEANINGFUL PLACE TO BEGIN THIS REDUCTION.

Q. BUT HAVE PROPOSALS BEEN MADE, AND IF SO, BY WHOM?

A. THIS CONCEPT HAS BEEN DISCUSSED AND HAS APPEARED IN THE LEBANESE PRESS OVER RECENT MONTHS.

IN ITS LATEST MANIFESTATION THIS CONCEPT APPARENTLY INVOLVES ENDING THE OPEN CARRYING OF ARMS ON THE STREETS, BEGINNING IN CERTAIN AREAS AND THEN GRADUALLY EXPANDING. WE DO NOT AS YET HAVE FULL DETAILS, BUT VERY STRONGLY WELCOME CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS TO END THE TENSIONS. CHRISTOPHER

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